

The Curry Arts Journal
Spring 1973

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The purpose of THE CURRY ARTS JOURNAL is to provide an outlet of creative expression for the students, faculty and eventually the alumni of Curry College. Poems, short stories, plays, essays, critiques, drawings, and photographs are welcome. It is to be published twice a year, winter and spring, hopefully for years to come.

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Dedicated to Richard Steiner

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Shelley Swartz

POEM FOR THE BLUE MIST MOTEL OF YOUR MIND

tonight
my arms are light
as a motel-room dresser drawer
while somewhere
bellies pressed hard together
swell and pop
like boiling cheese
and bedsheets smell
of dried saliva.

from the table
a girl smiles at me
like a car grill
while somewhere
as night drifts down
like a parachute
a woman licks moonlight
off her lips
and her lover tells her
that the stars
are the souls of crickets.

outside,
winter,
meaningless winter-
shaking broken glass
in a brown paper bag.

Buff Brown

Open your eyes to let the sun
see its reflection in them.
Rise up with it,
and let me live your smile.
As the morning tide swells and rolls,
let us,
And we'll follow circles of the sun,
forever,
Rising

Falling
Spinning a human web of love.

Susan Hallett

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Little bits of darkness drill their
way into the whiteness of meaning,
slowly congregate together, and form
a beautiful thought.

Mark Snyder

Is the water really green
From the money that I've seen?
As the wind blows through the trees
Scattering their leaves across the pond.

Am I to leave the life I'm loving
Or love the life I'm leading?
The answer isn't what I want,
It's the question that I need to ask.

Living out the choice I make,
Living with the chance I take,
Loving life is no mistake;
Leaving dreams, it's time to wake.
Kevin Maxwell

lust
grabs hold of my ankles with irritating claws
makes its way up to my knee
muscles tighten unwilling
as it brushed soft but firm and nips
and nips the inside of my thigh
licking and sucking--releasing the rapids

I moan a long low sound

Marilyn Smith

I noticed the way
while walking the wood,
the fallen snow
had understood,
to place itself
on all oak branches
half black, half white
from avalanches.
yet far away
it seemed to me
each branch was white
a snowed-in sea.
again, again
I found this way,
while jays and crows
where branches sway
payed no mind
to what I found,
except my noise
upon the ground.

David Lehr

All wanted to meet him;
His tawny skin glowed with superiority.
All wanted to be seen with him;
In the sun, his hair flowed with the breeze.
All wanted to touch him;
His body felt a man, his innocence, a boy.
But all were afraid to approach him.
He died of loneliness for being better,
All others died for their being blind.

Wendy Davidov

THE OLD THINGS

Fourteen years ago the hoary old woman's son left. She had been younger then, proud and straight. But time had become her companion and the years of work spoke on her. Even now as the day wore on there was work undone. Always there was more work. The war had been hard on everyone. But this tired woman had certainly stood the worst.

Now she leaned on the sagging white picket fence that ringed her tiny grey house. The chickens had long ago destroyed the lawn, and the house appeared as only a house can after fourteen years in disrepair. The hot midwest sun hung overhead, its intense rays constantly making old things older.

And though she had learned that hope hurts, she still nurtured a hidden single hope. For had not the letter said this day? Yes, this very day. Oh, please, if there is a God, let it be true. Let my son come home. She had worked her fingers to hard callouses, and suffered much, all for this day.

When he left he said, "I'll be back, Mama; I'll need someplace to go after the war." And for fourteen long years she had held that memory. Over and again she had battled the temptations. To sell the house and settle in an old folks' camp would have been so easy. No one would have blamed her. She had scrubbed thousands of floors, washed laundry that the townsfolk called her the washer woman. Not a person in the village did not have garments mended by her twisted fingers. And somehow she had met the payments and paid the bills. A woman alone, she had suffered much, but the letter said he would be home today.

In the evening she took her weary eyes from the dusty road. Slowly she climbed the steps and went inside. Her dinner was light; lard and crackers, and a cup of bouillon. She did not even taste it.

Afterwards she sat in the big chair. Many years ago it had been her husband's favorite chair, and the boy had sat there many evenings with his father. But now it was stained and greasy, flagellating reminder of other days. She wanted to read but, instead she gazed glassy eyed at the dusty floors, and cracked woodwork. And the old things seemed older.

When she awoke it was past midnight. And she was alone. She was totally alone. Just herself and the meaning of time. What could not be done in fourteen years had been accomplished in one day.

And outside a man climbed the steps and cried, "Mama, I'm home!" But the woman would carry the meaning of time with her to her grave. Even as old things are made older.

Joseph J. Shaw

When you can forget the past,
And no longer want,
Or hope or dream of what was.

When his face, his eyes, the lips you used to kiss,
Do not bring that familiar surge of longing--

If you can hear a song, and not recall--
Walk through the pine trees, now covered with snow,
and not see his face.

If you can remember, and then laugh at your foolishness,
Or care for someone without finding similarity--

When tears are no longer but a word away--
When "maybe today" is no longer spoken--
When sleep comes easily, with no thought of him--

If you can say no when he asks again,
At last it's done.

Susan Hallett

all alone--
isolation--death row
all alone
like the last butterfly in fall

Marilyn Smith

AMERICA

Before her I stand
Another immigrant
With upturned palms
A black one at that

To her I came
alone, an exile
from an impoverished land
A Black one at that

She feeds me her fallen scraps
The bloody pieces of red bread
Served on a white table
Covered with a cloth of black cotton
A black one at that.

She hands me down books
Hollers, "speak right native"
Then tells me to say, thank you, Mass
Like my lot
A black One at that

Tony Brown

Shuffling of thought
Streams curious
Separation card game
Steady wonder

Change of world
Mountain amazed
Collect lost image
Forgotten friend

Belle Greenberger

DEATH WARMED OVER

Sad faces limply remind me of past days,
when life pumped through my petrified bones.
The Rabbi tells the sleepy congregation he knew me,
but everyone knows that I never went to Temple.
My father says, "He never was what I expected. In fact,
he was useless, nothing like me."
Grandma says, "He never made me proud, I doubt he ever
could have".
She's right, you know.
Sister says, "He treated me like dirt. I'm glad
he's gone."

Won't they be surprised when I pop open the lid
and say,
"You all bored me to death."

Mark Snyder

you wish the ocean
were a woman
the perpetual wave
and the endless drop
infinite wastelands
at the edge of the bed.
you wish the sky
were her eyelids
and into the white
the piercing light
into my mind in jagged glass thoughts
the claws that stroke my throat
and the salt that cleans the wound
the sting of some truth
that would not let you
you wish your mind
were its own cosmos
its own child
and even now you can see the planets of your brain
and they are falling they are falling
and you turn to me and tell me
you wish the ocean
were a woman
as if the water would love you

M. W. Iverson

I make a thousand exclamation points--
scrawl a thousand harsh words...

still my stomach aches with rejection,
my mind blaring out the thoughts
that are slowly ripping me apart

Marilyn Smith

Hi,

How ya doing? That's good. I'm all right. I guess you know how things are here: one day they tell you your're fine and the next day they tell you you're nutty.

Hey, could you do me a favor; oh your're so kind, I knew you would. Listen, get in touch with you know who for me, tell her to find out about that weird devil worshippers' organization and when it next meets. Hey, man, like it really is urgent that she gets Dr. Ahfulsinister out there to the meeting place; you realize he is the only one who can save the mortal world. Come on, don't you call me crazy too; you've seen them as many times as I have. Where is your conscience? You tell the good doctor exactly how they are coming and what they look like, goddamn them. You've got to do everything possible to stop them. Don't forget to tell him how they come in a pre-dream stupor and how the wind carries that ancient relic of a train right past the bedroom window. Dammit, how many times have we laid in terror knowing what they are and what they bring. Yeah, and when finally the nerves of your body come back to life to give you just enough strength to pull back the window shade, and oh shit, it's the train. It's about two hundred years old and rather beautiful aesthetically speaking.

The outside shell is just a layer of what appears to be some old barn siding. The inside, oh yes, the inside is a beautiful bloody burgundy red, yes remember? The cabins are lit by dim oil lamps, one about every two seats or should I say coffins. Remember the coffins? They are black and oh so shiny, they really are some fine pieces of carpentry. The tops are off and there they lie, yes, how many times have we seen those skinny grinning emaciated skeletons.

Yes, remember the smile? It's a very personable smile, but the darkness of their sockets tell you that their deviance should not be questioned. They grin and give a little flick of their skinless fingers in a beckoning manner as if to say, "come on, oh come on; it really is alot of fun, you'll love it." But you can see by their petrified expressions that it would be nothing short of terrorism. They beckon, they smile, and all you can do is slam the shade shut, let your heart pound itself down to a more relaxing pace, and pray--pray to anything for your sanity. Please you've got to tell the people, they must know of this treachery and stop it. They won't listen to me anymore; they think the death train is in my mind. But it is real and it will be a slow and painful death. Do me this favor and tell them this please.

Well, I've gotta go now; it's time for my reading class. My group is on inkblots; you know they really are a piss.

Don't forget. Catch ya later, and thanks again.

Bye,
Me

Mary Alexander

ULTIMATELY

when death knocked
at the old man's door

he wasn't sure at first

the knock
so light and timid
it could have been
a boy selling
newspaper subscriptions

Buff Brown

Silence,
condensed
into an embroidered
snuff-box
for a delicate
snort
of confusion.

Shelley Swartz

The child looks through the old Victorian mirror
And sees the faded image.
the child-like braids, a child-like smile,
Child-like eyes that focus on the earth's
Various colors.
She turns slowly around to view her total self
But sees only a small part of her soul.
She sees a questioning image, her own.

But she does not really see herself
In the old mirror;
She only sees that faded image of what others would
Like her to be.
As she looks deep into the mirror she sees the
Reflections of her relatives' peering eyes.
The braids may not remain in essence but
Will always be retained in thought.
Her child-like smile will frown at what her
Child-like eyes will see, And she will know
What she looks at.

She looks again into the old mirror, but
The image that she viewed before has changed.
The colors of life act as camouflage to the
Evils and corruption of the earth.
The image is blurred and the old Victorian
Mirror cannot be seen through any more.
She is no longer a child.

Wendy Davidov

By myself
inside the woods,
a lone tree,
oars, stirrups,
again, again,
then--
the top
a flimsy
stop.
my mind a storm,
an ant by my finger,
climbed this tree
like me,
and I forgot myself,
felt the ant,
the tree,
the sun,
the cool noon breeze.

David Lehr

I stand at the screen door fartin'.
blues on the box inside
crickets and crashing surf outside

scratching my belly--
squishin' bugs with my foot--

wishin' somebody's hand was squeezing my ass.

Marilyn Smith

A machine,
each movement timed,
predictable,
a balance of muscle,
bone,
a smooth exchange
of weight--
she walks
from me.

David Lehr

Time is running short.
Clocks tick away the faster-faster minutes
and my mind explodes in a volcanic eruption
of dates, things and places.
My brain, the acting file cabinet,
is locked and I can't find the key.
Help me straighten out this mess,
by the way, what's your name & address?

Mark Snyder

Sea gulls fly silent,
A purple sea ripples with the wind.
Hot sand burns
Salty breeze for the nose,
Carefree clouds drift across an orange sky
Why can't I?

Susan Hallett

THE MEANING OF "I"

Today it is a popular belief that the individual is a nonconformist. We are constantly reminded in all sorts of advertisements that the man who smokes a certain brand of cigarettes doesn't follow the crowd, or the man who drinks a certain Scotch is his own man. It's almost as if being different is the only criterion for being an individual, as if a man who consciously tries to do the opposite of his peers is, in their eyes, a rugged individualist. Few and far between, though, are those who don't care what their fellows think of them, almost to the point of being unaware of them, who do what they do because they want to, not because others approve. They are rare and come from many walks of life, but I knew one briefly and gained much of my present ideas of individualism from him.

His name was Michael Dunning, and he was, in fact probably still is, a sculptor. I used to go to his house frequently to visit his brother Davey, and occasionally I would watch him work. As I stood in the doorway of his studio, he would be chipping stone or modeling clay or mixing some concoction, unaware of my presence. I often thought that I could stand there all day, and he'd never realize I was there. Crouched over his work, he looked like a poor imitation of a praying mantis, the thin cords of muscle in his spindly arms bulging and the lines of his sharply featured face hard in concentration. Sometimes he would stop suddenly, step back, and inspect his labor for several minutes, still not knowing anyone was watching him. Then he'd start again with so fluid a motion that I'd have to blink my eyes to make sure I'd seen him stop. Then Davey would call me, and I'd jump with a start, as if waking from a dream. I always left overwhelmed by his love for his work, hoping that some day I would have that same enthusiasm for my chosen field. And it was this love which was to prompt an astonishing act, an act that has shaped, more than anything else, my con-

which was to prompt an astonishing act, an act that has shaped, more than anything else, my concept of individualism.

It happened when I was talking with Davey one day in his living room. In the course of the conversation he told me that Michael had turned down a one thousand dollar offer from a society matron who wanted him to do a statue. It seemed that a friend had recommended her to him, and she offered him the commission without having ever seen his work. The only reason was that her friend had thought highly of him. I sat dumbfounded and asked Davey for a reason, but he could only shrug his shoulders. Just then Michael stepped into the room, apparently having overheard us. He immediately walked over to where we sat and asked us what we wanted to know. There was something very reassuring and serene in his manner, and I blurted out the question I had asked Davey before I could stop myself. For awhile, he just looked at us, his face as impassive as that of a Buckingham Palace guard. Yet his eyes radiated a kind of fatherly warmth and understanding, as if he could wash away all our fears by just sitting there and saying nothing. Then he explained.

He told us the story of a fifteen year old boy who always dreamed of giving form to Nature's shapeless building blocks. The boy was working mostly with clay, but whenever he looked at stone, he could see what it was always meant to be. He took many art courses and had many teachers, most of whom could not understand the strange shapes he made and told him he had no future. He failed many of those courses, because he refused to follow assignments, but designed sculptures of his creation. And then there were those teachers who marvelled at his instinct for form and understood his work for what it was, not for any like-

marvelled at his instinct for form and understood his work for what it was, not for any likeness to the works of masters. As he grew older the knowledge he needed to give his thoughts physical form increased. Some of his work sold, some didn't, but he never compromised his resolve for the sake of money. He would always retain the integrity of his ideas, because without it a statue was only a hollow mockery of art, a mirror of someone else's will.

Michael then stopped his story and with a slight smile got up and went to his studio. We sat motionless for several minutes without saying anything. But we now understood why Michael didn't accept and why he never would. The lady only wanted a copier, a man who could imitate the work of somebody else, not an artist.

Looking back at that memory, I can only think of what kind of will, what kind of integrity was required to turn down that offer. After all it meant \$1,000, and it was only a small statue for a private home. But the meaning of that refusal goes deeper than nonconformity. It is a resolve such that the value of the work is all that really matters, and that any reward is incidental. Such an unbending will is hard for me to accept completely, because I am not made of such stuff as he. I can only conjure up a wonderful lesson and reflect a little bit before I bend with the wind.

Theodore Don

If we believe all that's said
The new morality and God is dead
My tears of pity, words of blame
It's not just this city
The whole world's the same

A voice from the heavens
Is just what we need
And the rich would be donors
For the poor they would feed

Along we go just living
And doing as was said
Time now out of kilter
And then we are dead

If the good that comes from you
Could come from all of us
Our world could just begin
To rise up from the dust.

Kevin Maxwell

STIREALITY

Orange and yellow kitchen
smells of purple lilacs in chinawhite pitchers,
and i bend over a bowl of rice krispies,
trying to decipher
the sounds of the world
beyond: (burp!)
snapcrackleandpop

Shelley Swartz

CRISP FOOTPRINTS

Sun-browned grass bends death-like
praying not to dreamed-up gods.
The children watch from winter windows
lines of tracks from hungry pheasants;
uncertain footprints dot the snow;
and pheasants, unaware they're watched,
feed on seed and bread left there by children
gazing silent.
The brown pine needles slip from boughs
like children leaving home,
while oak leaves grip, and challenge northern wind
like old men's thick wool coats;
all crisp footprints fade in winter's freeze.
The fall-drained leaves are brown;
they glide and twist to find the ground
that soon is iced with snow.

Michael Mogel